This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of Internet Protocol (IP) provisioning for use in a cable network having a network provisioning unit (NPU) in communication with a plurality of embedded settop boxes (eSTBs), the method comprising:

receiving eSTB IP provisioning requests from eSTBs provided by at least two different vendors through a signaling pathway that uses a firewall to separate a management network from a data network housing the NPU, the eSTB IP provisioning requests outputted according to a first protocol; ~~and~~

identifying one of the at least two different vendors associated with each eSTB;

identifying eSTB IP provisioning data associated with each identified vendor; and

transmitting the identified eSTB IP provisioning data from the NPU to the eSTBs requesting the eSTB IP provisioning through the signaling pathway that uses the firewall to separate the management network from the data network housing the NPU, wherein the identified eSTB IP provisioning data is outputted according to the first protocol such that the provisioning of the eSTBs is standardized for each vendor.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~2~~ 1 further comprising determining the vendor of the requesting eSTB using the NPU based on an eSTB vendor identifier included in the eSTB IP provisioning request.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the NPU includes a database comprising IP provisioning data associated by vendor identifiers with a plurality of eSTB vendors, and wherein determining the vendor of the requesting eSTB includes searching the database for a vendor identifier that matches with the eSTB vendor identifier.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the eSTB vendor identifier includes at least one of a serial number, a hardware version, a software version, an Organization Unique Identifier (OUI), a model number, or a vendor name.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein each eSTB is associated with Customer Premise Equipment (CPE) and wherein each CPE includes an embedded cable modem (eCM), and the method further comprises bridging IP signals through the eCM to the eSTB.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the first protocol is defined according to a Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP).

8-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) A system for Internet Protocol (IP) provisioning over a cable network, the system comprising:

a plurality of embedded settop boxes (eSTBs) in communication with the cable network, at least two of the eSTBs provided by at least two different vendors, each eSTB configured to transmit IP provisioning requests ~~to~~ through a signaling pathway that uses a firewall to separate a management network from a data network within the cable network~~the network~~ according to a first protocol; and

a network provisioning unit (NPU) within the data network~~in communication with the network~~, the NPU configured to receive the eSTB IP provisioning requests, identify one of the at least two different vendors associated with each eSTB, identify eSTB IP provisioning data associated with each identified vendor, and then transmit the identified eSTB IP provisioning data through the signaling pathway that uses the firewall to separate the management network from the data network housing the NPU~~in response thereto~~, wherein the identified eSTB IP provisioning data is transmitted according to the first protocol such that the provisioning of the eSTBs is standard for each vendor in so far as each eSTB utilizes the first protocol for provisioning.

15. (Original) The system of claim 14 wherein the NPU selects the provisioning data

according to the vendor of the requesting eSTB.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the NPU determines the vendor of the requesting eSTB vendor identifier included in the eSTB IP provisioning request.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16 wherein the NPU includes a database comprising IP provisioning data associated by vendor identifiers with a plurality of eSTB vendors, and wherein the NPU determines the vendor of the requesting eSTB by searching the database for a vendor identifier that matches with the eSTB vendor identifier.

18-19. Cancelled

20. (Original) The system of claim 14 wherein the first protocol is defined according to a Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP).

21. (Currently Amended) A method of provisioning settop boxes (STBs) to execute a set of operations associated with supporting media services provided by a media service provider when the STBs have different instructional requirements depending on whether the STBs are provided by a first or second vendor, the method comprising:

receiving provisioning requests from the STBs through a signaling pathway that uses a firewall to separate a management network from a data network housing a network provisioning unit (NPU);

identifying at least one of the STBs requesting the provisioning to be associated with the first vendor and at least one of the STBs requesting the provisioning to be associated with the second vendor; ~~and~~

identifying provisioning instructions associated with each identified vendor; and

providing the provisioning instructions to the requesting STBs according to the different instructional requirements of the first and second vendors identified to be associated with the requesting STBs through the signaling pathway that uses the firewall to separate the management network from the data network housing the NPU, the provisioning instructions being sufficient to program the requesting STBs to execute the set of operations associated with supporting the media services provided by the media service provider.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21 wherein the provisioning requests are received and the provisioning instructions are sent according to ~~the~~ a same protocol.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the media provider provides the media services with assistance from a first and second headend unit, and wherein the method further comprises adjusting the provisioning instructions depending on whether the requesting STBs are associated with the first or second headend unit.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the media provider provides the media services with assistance from a first and second headend unit that are respectively associated with third and fourth vendors and the STBs have different instructional requirements depending on whether the STBs are receiving signals from the headend of the third or fourth vendor, wherein the method further comprises providing the provisioning instructions to the requesting STBs according to the different instructional requirements of the first and second vendors as well as the third and fourth vendors.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the first and second vendors are different from the third and fourth vendors.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 wherein the third vendor is different from the fourth vendor.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 wherein at least one of the first or second vendors is the same as one of the third or fourth vendors.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the STBs are configured to process television signals for output to a display and the method further comprises transmitting the provisioning instructions to the STBs over a cable television network.